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OLD TESTAMENT STUDY IN SWITZERLAND.

II. GERMAN SWITZERLAND.

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Although the language used in the universities, churches and schools of German Switzerland is pure High German, that of the street and the home is a dialect as different from High German as Highland Scotch is from English. This may account for the fact that one rarely meets an American student here. Unless one has first learned High German, and has a household of his own with help who speak the same, it would be difficult to avoid this *mundart* of which the native Baselters are so proud.

The best Hebrew and Old Testament work which I have seen done in any continental University is done by the Swiss students of Basel. The test of Old Testament work in a German University is the seminar, where the professor meets once a week with the students who volunteer to do special work. In the first place, the seminar attracts only those students who are willing to devote extra time to Hebrew study. The number in attendance upon the seminar at Basel, with its ninety-nine theological students, is greater than at Berlin with its six hundred. The seminar here is conducted in alternate years by Professors Dulun and von Orelli. The critical position and method of these two professors are very different, but they are equally popular with the students, and their geniality and courtesy in the seminar are in great contrast to the denunciations for ignorance which the students in Berlin seminar meekly accept from Dr. Dillmann.

Another reason for the interest in Old Testament work here is the thorough preparatory instruction in Hebrew which the students receive. Prof. Dulun is also the instructor of Hebrew at the Gymnasium (College), so that when the student enters upon his theological course at the University he has

already had a year and a half of training in Hebrew. The same regulation obtains here as in Germany, mentioned in a former article. The theological student, upon entering the University, must present his certificate from the Gymnasium, of proficiency in Hebrew, or he must make up the deficiency and pass an examination. With all this strictness of regulation, both here and in Germany, the student who has little love and no talent for Hebrew manages to "get through," providing he is sufficiently proficient in other branches. But this system fosters Hebrew and Old Testament study, also the few who pursue it with love for it have the best of opportunity, and from among the fewer still who volunteer to do original work in the seminar are to be expected the Old Testament scholars of the future. By this method also the professor has the pleasure of having at least some students who can appreciate his best critical work in the lecture room.

Basel probably offers more theological instruction than any other city of its size on the continent. Besides the institutions outside of the University, of which I will make mention later, the University itself is doubly manned, owing to the zeal of the monied conservatism of Basel to maintain professors both for the Old and New Testament who shall offset the advanced critical teaching of the professors appointed and maintained by the State. The occupant of the official Old Testament chair is Professor B. Dulun. He was established here in 1888, as successor to Smend, who went to Göttingen. It is an important post, with the memories of the Buxtorfs, and has been occupied by the ablest Semitic and Old Testament scholars. Prof. Dulun is a critic of the most advanced type, or "ganz links" as he was designated to me by a Berlin professor. He claims, however, complete independence in criticism. "I do not belong to the positive school nor to the negative school—I seek simply the truth," is one of his lecture-room remarks. Though one may differ from his conclusions, it is interesting to listen to one who is conscious of no existing restraint upon precisely the results to which his investigations lead him. His method is also unique. Absolutely free from any trace of affectation of learning, there is a very ready command of the necessary critical apparatus.

In all of his lectures he speaks conversationally and free from his manuscript. Holding in his hand a pocket edition of the Hebrew Bible, he makes constant excursions from the passage he may be treating, not in the way I have observed in some lecture rooms, so that the student loses interest in the main question, but in a way to show its connection with the whole development of Old Testament literature. A single excursion may consume most of the hour and one marvels at the quick flight of the time. He is an experienced detective of Deuteronomic and priestly or otherwise incorporated elements in the earlier literature, and whether they consist of a passage, a line or a word, he never fails to single them out and exhibit their incongruity with their surroundings. His favorite study is the prophetic literature. Many of the positions of his "*Theologie der Propheten*" which he published as Privat Docent in Göttingen in 1875, his later studies have caused him to abandon. He is just now putting through the press his commentary on Isaiah, or Isaiahs it will be, as, according to his analysis, not two, but a much larger number of writers are represented in the book of Isaiah. This work will be interesting as the favorite theme of an indefatigable scholar. To friend and opponent it will be valuable in its method, as it will contain also an original translation in different sized type so that one can see at a glance the portions which the author regards as Isaianic, and the portions assigned to various other hands.

In greatest contrast, both in personality and method, from Prof. Dulun is Prof. von Orelli, well known to English readers through the English edition of his "*Messianic Prophecy*." He prepared, also, the commentaries on Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the twelve minor prophets in the "*Kurzgefasster Kommentar*" of Strack and Zöckler. Prof. von Orelli is employed by an evangelical society in Basel, above alluded to, whose purpose is to promote a more conservative type of teaching. Being thus maintained he receives from the University the courtesy of Professor in regular standing, and is during the present year Rector of the University. Though Prof. von Orelli is here regarded as conservative, in America he would be considered advanced, as he holds, for example, to the

various sources of the Pentateuch and the diverse authorship of Isaiah. If he did not he would be a unique figure in a continental university. His difference from the more advanced critics is one of degree and method rather than of kind. In his lectures he combats what he considers extravagances in criticism, seeking always to conserve all possible positive religious elements in Old Testament teaching, and seeking the spiritual welfare of the students. As Prof. Dulun treats the Old Testament from the standpoint of the historian and literary critic, Prof. von Orelli approaches it more as a churchman. In the lecture-room he is dignified, guarded in his statements, reading closely and very deliberately from his manuscript. He is active in the church, belongs to the evangelical wing of the National church,* but here also is moderate and guarded. He preaches about once a year in the Münster. He is co-editor of a church paper, the *Kirchenfreund*, in connection with Prof. Oettli of Berne, and Pastor Pestalozzi. The other Old Testament lecturer in the University is Privat Docent Lic. K. Marti who combines University work with the pastorate of the village church of MuttENZ. Pastor Marti belongs to the Rietschel school in Theology, and to the advanced school of critics, sharing, in general, the critical positions of Prof. Dulun, though differing in details. He has published a brochure upon Jeremiah† and one recently upon Zechariah, chapters 1-8.‡ He has also an article in the current number of the "Studien und Kritiken" on "Des Ursprung des Satans," and another in the "Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche" on "Das Erste Officielle Bekenntniss." He is also one of the translators of the new translation of the Old Testament which is being edited by Prof. Kautzsch of Halle.

There are two other institutions in Basel with full theological faculties. One is the Prediger Schule, whose object is to train for the ministry men who have not had the fullest early

* The established church, though outwardly a unit, contains two well defined and directly opposed parties, viz: The Reformers, who are Unitarians; and the Positives, who are evangelical. Between these two extremes are the Vermittler i. e., Mediators, Reconcilers.

† Der Prophet Jeremia von Anotot. pp. 66. Basel, 1889.

‡ Der Prophet Zacharja der Zeitgenosse Serubbabels.

training, and perhaps lack in regular certificates of preparatory work. The graduates of this theological school, if they desire to enter the pulpits of the National church, must submit to the state examinations. The training is supposed to be more conservative and strictly evangelical than that of the University. The other is the famous Basel Mission Haus, where students are trained with special reference to the foreign mission field. In both of these institutions, I am told, good Old Testament work is done. Missions-Inspector Oehler, Director of the Mission House, has just issued a new (third) edition of the *Theology of the Old Testament*, by his late father, Dr. G. F. Oehler. The first edition is known to English readers through the translation in Clark's Theological Library. Among Basel's institutions for theological training must be numbered also the Pilger Mission auf St. Chrischona. It is controlled by a committee in Basel, and situated on a hill of the Jura, overlooking the town. This is a unique institution, such as one might look for in our colonial period on an American frontier. It takes men from the plow, the anvil and the cobbler's bench, gives them four years of training, and sends them out as home missionaries in city and country, each year also sending its graduates as missionaries to the Germans in America, also to Africa and other distant parts. It does not wean the pupils from their former pursuits, but they must perform the manual labor connected with the St. Chrischona farm, and they go from the hayfield, the baking trough and the washhouse, into the theological lecture room. On Saturday afternoons one may see there a group of young men discussing theology while paring potatoes for the Sunday dinner. They are taught New Testament Greek, but the exegesis of the Old Testament is given without the Hebrew.

This glimpse at these various institutions of Basel suggests many questions in theological training for reflection, but the limits of this sketch are already passed. It remains to mention Berne and Zurich which have no theological Faculties outside of the Universities. The Old Testament Professor at Berne is Prof. Samuel Oettli, mentioned above. He is the author of the *Commentaries on Canticles and Lamentations*

in the “Kurzgefasster Kommentar,” of Strack and Zöckler. He is of similar spirit and critical position with von Orelli. He is also a preacher and lecturer, a short time ago having given us in Basel a delightful lecture on his recent visit to Palestine. The Professor of Old Testament in Zurich is Prof. Victor Ryssel, the author of a critical Commentary on the Book of Micah;* also of the commentaries on Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther in the “Kurtzgefasstes Exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament.”

* Untersuchung über die Text gestalt und die Echtheit des Buches Micah. Ein Krit. Commentar Zu Micah. Leipzig, 1887.